2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

what took place, informants were anxious to point this out. They also admitted that its successful carrying out depended on several factors which no longer operated. The former Ngoni households with a number of servants and nursemaids were only to be found in the families of the Paramount and subordinate chiefs. The rigid separation of the girl from her own family at marriage was no longer usual in the central kingdom where Ngoni marriages often took place in the same village, and where daughters of important men stayed in their fathers' villages at marriage instead of leaving.

In Ngoni households family sleeping and eating arrangements depended not upon the small individual family but on the extended family group and on the boys' dormitory (*laweni*). As a general rule small children slept with their mother in her hut, but when her husband was sleeping with her it was considered wrong to have any but very young children in the hut. Boys up to the age of seven, when they went to the *laweni*, and girls up to their marriage, usually slept in the hut of a mother or a widowed sister of their father.

Each wife, after she had been 'shown the hearth-stones', had a granary built for her by her husband or her husband's brothers where she stored grain. On the rafters in her hut, and in pots and jars on the enclosed verandah, and in pits dug under the eaves, she stored other foodstuffs, such as chillies, beans and sweet potatoes. From these supplies, supplemented by fresh 'relish' from the gardens or bush, she cooked daily meals which she served to her husband, and which her younger sons in the *laweni* fetched to eat there, while she ate with her young children. Her husband's meals and the older boys' meals were taken in company with the male members of his kinship group and other villagers at the men's meeting-place by the gate of the kraal. His wife sent his food by a child in a covered basket with the small pot of relish on top. The publicity of the men's eating habits made them critical among their fellows of their wives' cooking, and this was a strong incentive among Ngoni wives to maintain a high standard of cooking. In addition to sending food to her husband, an Ngoni wife was expected to send a basket of food now and then to her father-in-law, or to any of her brothers-in-law who had assisted her to mend a roof or build a granary.

Within a wife's hut, not only food but other possessions, both personal and household, were stored. Clothes for daily and ceremonial use; mats for sleeping on and for drying grain; pots for water, cooking, and beer-brewing; ornamental jars for storing beans; baskets for carrying grain; food baskets embroidered with beads—the Ngoni wife of good family expected to possess all these and to keep them carefully. Many of them she brought with her on her marriage or had given her later as presents by her own parents and family, in order that she might not appear poor or of low rank among her husband's people. For the same reason, she

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939)1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

rocky outcrops. In September, several weeks before the rains begin, the trees burst out into red foliage, making scarlet rings and patches around the mountains and along the valleys, while through the hard-baked earth spring gladioli and orchids. This is the time of the bush fires when grass is burned and men and boys go hunting. The first rain storms bring a transformation. Fresh green grass covers the land, and scarlet leaves turn bright green on bushes and trees, and later marigolds turn the hillsides golden and yellow arums and red-hot pokers appear along the roadsides.

In making this high plateau their home, the Ngoni chose it primarily for the pasture lands for their cattle. They sited their villages on the ridges or the slopes of the hills, where they had a commanding position, with access to water, good land for cultivation in the shallow dips and river valleys, and woodlands where they could cut poles for their houses and cattle kraals.

The traditional Ngoni village was built in a horse shoe formation round a circular cattle kraal. Larger villages had a central kraal with huts round it, and several other kraals each with its horseshoe grouping of huts. A large village, and there were many of over a hundred huts, seemed at first sight to be a sprawling collection of huts and kraals, with a few tall trees about and several red ant-hills. A pattern of hut sites became apparent, however, once the family and kinship grouping was known. Behind each hut was one or more circular grain stores built on platforms, large ones for maize and smaller ones for millet or ground-nuts. In the Central Ngoni kingdom, and sometimes in the Northern kingdom, there were tall reed fences round the huts of leading families, enclosing an open space where household work went on, and wood and grass were stored.

There were two focal points in each village, reproduced on a minor scale in the hamlets round each kraal. One was the 'big house'[1] at the head of the kraal, where the leading woman had her home.

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

343
417
481
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8. A well-filled grain store

342
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516
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[facing page 48]

9. Winnowing

342
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354

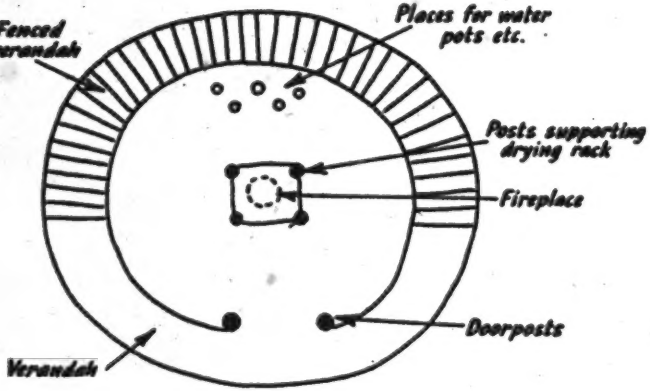

DIAGRAM OF HUT

351
343
417

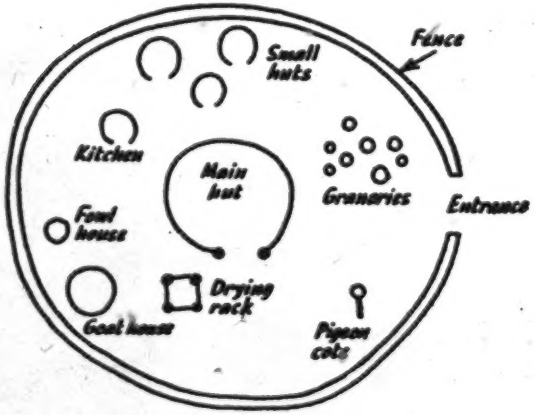

DIAGRAM OF HOUSEHOLD COMPOUND

[p. 74]

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939)1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

old Ngoni families, and shining like marble, as did the hut and veranda floors. On this polished space, or else on the veranda, the child's grandmother sat when callers had been announced, and from that vantage-point she could command the entrance through the surrounding fence, and agree to receive callers who had asked for admittance. Also in front of the hut was another drying platform which was large enough to offer shelter from the sun in hot weather; the dovecot where the 'royal pigeons' lived if the household was of the royal clan or distinguished enough to aspire to keeping pigeons. Off to one side was a hut for the goats at night and another, hoisted up on a platform, for the poultry. On the other side of the main hut were the grain stores, built up on low platforms. The maize stores were up to ten feet high and ten feet in diameter in these big households, and well-to-do women would have four or five of them bulging with maize cobs. There were smaller circular mudded bins for ground-nuts and millet. Behind the hut were two or three small huts where some of the helpers slept, and one of them was generally a kitchen hut. Piles of wood, and bundles of thatching grass bound neatly with bark rope, were stacked against the fence.

There were innumerable objects around the compound of interest to the small child prowling about. Two or three tall wooden pounding mortars, so heavy that they could not be lifted and had to be trundled on their circular base from one place to another, stood near the kitchen hut, or were moved to the front if the women pounding had to watch children there. There were much smaller mortars for pounding ground-nuts, kept when not in use in the fenced-in veranda; and one or more large flat stones for grinding finger millet and bulrush millet. Baskets were of all sizes and shapes from the small round food basket with a lid in which father's food was carried to the kraal gate, to the wide shallow winnowing baskets, the deep round carrying baskets some as large as two feet in diameter, and the porous baskets used as

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

516
343

26. Making clay figures

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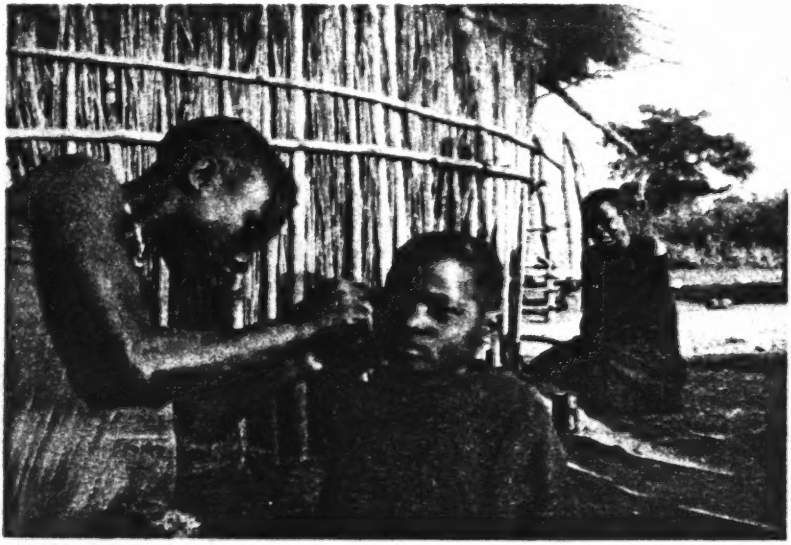
291
342



[facing page 144]

27. Ear piercing

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

593 brew beer when her husband asks her. In addition to this minimal amount of required co-operation, in many instances husband and wife have a great deal in common. They may go to church or visit a relative, or even go together to a beer party.

The obligation on a man to clothe his wife is the most clear-cut and obvious duty in marriage. It is the failure to clothe that is [586] usually cited as evidence of desertion when a woman seeks a divorce. There is no specific standard to which he must clothe her, but she usually insists that she is not to be more poorly clad than are her 291 neighbours. Clothes consisted in the old days of skins and barkcloth, [177] but cloth was introduced by Arabs before the Europeans arrived, and was used as a form of currency by the early European settlers. A few people still wear skins, but only on top of Western clothing. [986] There is no indigenous weaving, and all clothes have therefore to be bought in the shops.

342 The man takes the initiative in finding a hut in which he and his wife live, and it is he who undertakes the major work of repair. 356 Houses, if made of bamboo, last for about twenty years, but require 462 rethatching, while pole and mud huts last about eight years only. When a couple begin to live together they usually borrow an empty hut in the village, asking the man or woman who is looking after the hut if they can move in. No charge can be made for the loan of a [591] hut. If the marriage begins uxorilocally, and the woman has previously been living in a dormitory, she may ask the other girls in the dormitory to go and sleep elsewhere until her husband can build her a hut of her own. The man does the work of marking out the site, digging the foundations, cutting the trees for the framework, and so on. All these are men's jobs, and he may be assisted in the work by his male neighbours and relatives. His wife gathers thatching grass, but the men do the actual thatching. The finishing of the house is entirely the wife's work, and she usually gets her friends and relatives to help her plaster the walls and floor. The maintenance of the plaster remains her responsibility and she ought to renew the floor every month after she has menstruated.

593 Every wife ought to have her own garden, and, sooner or later, 433 her own storehouse. Most young people acquire gardens of their 291 own long before they marry, but continue to pool the produce of the [343] garden with the adult responsible for feeding them. This arrangement continues after marriage, and the incoming spouse at first merely assists in the garden of the other and is fed from the common storehouse of his or her parents or relatives. If a woman has been 591 living with her grandmother and her husband comes to live with her, 291 the couple draw on the wife's grandmother's storehouse for their food, 343 and place the produce of the wife's garden in it. Similarly, in virilocal marriage, a woman may at first help in her husband's garden and draw from his mother's storehouse. But after a year or two, if a man is not to be despised as a sluggard, he must build a storehouse in the village where they have settled, and see that there is

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

an adequate garden for his wife. He may clear a fresh garden on rejuvenated land, or enlarge his own or his wife's garden, depending on how they are placed. It is usually not until much later in the marriage that a man starts a garden of his own, distinct from the one nominally owned by his wife. The work of clearing a new place for a garden is not, among the Ngoni, necessarily a man's job, and can be undertaken by a woman alone if she has no man to assist her. If the husband is present, he does most of the tree felling, and his wife breaks up the new ground with her hoe.

The planting, weeding, and cultivating are all done by both men and women, and during the wet season a man goes to the garden with his wife early in the morning and they both work there until they are tired. Later, when the growing crop has to be protected against monkeys by day and wild pigs by night, they both spend long hours on watch in the garden shelter. At harvest, both cut down the maize and lift the ground crops, but only the woman can carry the produce to the village. If the man helps, it is by bringing a cart or sledge and taking home a large load pulled by oxen.

In the other subsistence pursuits of animal husbandry and hunting, there is no co-operation between husband and wife until the animals have been killed, when the woman has to cook the meat. Hunting is entirely a male occupation, and animal husbandry largely so. If a man goes away on a journey, he leaves his cattle in charge of his son or brother or father rather than with his wife. If there is no trustworthy man available, then they become his wife's responsibility, but all she in fact does is to see that the senior herdboy reports to her every evening about the state of the beasts. Small stock such as goats and sheep and pigs may be looked after entirely by the wife, and chickens are likely to be in her care.

A man looks to his wife to feed him, and it is considered a reflection on her industry if he does not get enough and has to hang about when his companions are eating in the hope that they will invite him to join them. She feeds him within the exigencies of the food-supply, which often involves semi-starvation in February and March. She is expected to cook competently, and if a woman continually burns the porridge which forms the basis of every meal, there will be strife between her and her husband. If she proves to be a really bad cook her husband may send her home again to be taught properly.

Beer-brewing is the work of women, and is a process lasting at least six days even after all the correct ingredients have been mustered. There is some variation with status in the extent to which husbands require their wives to brew beer, and it is in any case a matter in which the woman can take the initiative. Important men and chiefs who have many visitors like to be able to offer beer to their guests, so that queens spend much time brewing. But common men need to conserve their food supplies more carefully, and know that their visitors will be disappointed but not surprised if there is no beer. A woman sometimes brews to sell the beer and gain money to buy herself clothes, if her husband has no money to give her.

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

after a year or so. If he keeps it going himself he visits his own village for a week or two at a time to tend the garden, and stores the produce with a relative in the village. If, however, a man intends to reside for many years in his wife's village, he gives away his garden and concentrates his labours in his wife's garden. After a year or two he builds her a storehouse in her village and the couple begin to keep their own supplies separate from those of her relatives.

Even when the couple have their own storehouse it is considered proper if from time to time they are given maize by their parents. If a woman living virilocally goes to visit her parents and relatives and returns without maize or flour her husband's relatives are likely to laugh at her and say 'She must come from a very poor family'.

Uxorilocal residence is described by the vernacular term *cikomwene*. In its most general usage this word refers to the obligations a man owes to his wife's parents, particularly at the beginning of his marriage. It has three specific meanings:

(i) Uxorilocal residence.

(ii) Assistance rendered from time to time by a man in his wife's mother's garden.

(iii) A hoeing party of men and women from the man's village which works in his wife's mother's garden.

Uxorilocal residence is classed with these other two aspects of affinal obligation and like them it can be avoided completely, shirked, or executed in full. The extent to which the obligations are fulfilled

Table XIV. Virilocality and Uxorilocality, 1948-9

Wife's residence	Husband's residence		Total
	Rural	Away	
Virilocal ..	72	14	86
Uxorilocal ..	24	20	44
Total	96	34	130
Ratio of virilocal to uxorilocal wives	3	0·7	1·95
Association between husband's residence and wife's residence $\chi^2 = 12{\cdot}83$ $P < {\cdot}001$			
Informants as in Table XIII			

10: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1959
FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

422 231 643 Mpezeni is the owner of the land, or of the world. The cattle kept in the royal villages are held to have belonged formerly to Mpezeni I or to Zwangendaba, and therefore still belong to the Paramount Chief. Chiefs and other members of the royal lineage who have cattle inherited in this way, in fact dispose of them as they please when the Paramount Chief is not in their village, but if he appears and a beast is killed in his honour, it is the Paramount who is praised as the owner of the beast and not the local owner. In the capital and chief's villages the lieutenants are more under the control of the chief of the county, who may intervene to depose a lieutenant if he thinks that his cattle are not being well looked after.

622 621 648 The Administration does not distinguish between one type of village and another, and gives the same title of headman[1] to the man in charge of the village, whoever he may be. It tends to act on the assumption that all headmen are of equal status and have the same amount of authority in their villages. Combined with the decline in the power of the royal lineage, this policy may lead to the assimilation of the different types of village to a common form.

II. THE VILLAGE

Material Setting

361 Ngoni villages, which form the principal units of administration in the country, contain from half a dozen to 120 huts. It is seldom more than a quarter of a mile from one edge of a village to the other. There is a rough arrangement of huts into parallel lines, with the doors all facing the same way at right-angles to the direction of the lines. Kitchen huts, which are similar in appearance to dwelling huts, [343] are included in these lines, while in front of a line of dwellings may be a line of storehouses and sties for small stock. On the edge of the village are the cattle byres. There are seldom any fences marking off [417] courtyards within the village, so that it is possible to sit on the veranda of a hut and look along at all the other verandas. If there are well-established divisions within the village, the boundaries of the divisions may be indicated by lines of aloes.

592 Most people, except polygynists and some children, may be said to live in one hut, in which they keep most of their belongings and where they usually sleep. A single hut may be occupied by up to about ten

[1] Usually *bedimau*, pl. *mabedimau*; otherwise *mfumu yamuuzi*, pl. *mafumu wauzi*. The specific term for headman of a cadet or commoner village is *muzizimuuzi*.

10: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1959
FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

children, but it is unusual to find more than two adults living in the same hut. These may be either man and wife, or two women who are unmarried or whose husbands are away. Adolescent boys sleep in dormitories containing a number of boys, and there are similar huts for girls. Smaller children sleep with whoever is responsible for their upbringing, parents, grandparents, or other relative, as the case may be. Children in fact sleep in a variety of huts, sometimes with their elders and sometimes with one group of playmates, sometimes with another. Polygynists divide their time between their several wives, although they may tend to keep their belongings in the hut of their chief wife. Men do not as a rule possess huts of their own apart from those of their wives.

The hut is said to belong to the man or woman living in it. There is a tendency to refer to the man as the owner if the marriage is patrilocal and to the woman if it is matrilocal, but this is not an invariable rule, and the builder of the hut, who may be living elsewhere, may be referred to as the owner. About half the dwelling huts have kitchens near by, separate huts of similar construction which are used for cooking and as sleeping-places for children and visitors. When there is no separate kitchen, cooking is done inside the dwelling hut or on the veranda.

The village, then, is a collection of buildings of different types, in which people sleep and keep their possessions, animals are sheltered, and food stored. We must now consider how the inhabitants of the village are organized.

Structure

Royal villages have names in the Ngoni language that were given by their founders. For example, there is a regal village founded by Singu, the eldest son of Mpezeni I, called Ngalaweni, meaning 'dormitory', as it was there that he put his wives. These villages are also sometimes referred to by the name of the senior queen for whom they were founded.

Most commoner villages, however, do not possess names of this type, and are known only by descent-names or by the names of individuals. These are usually the name and descent-name of the founder of the village, the man who first established the village as a separate unit. It is this individual name that is used to refer to the present headman of the village, the man recognized by the chief and the Administration as responsible for the village. This office is hereditary,

10: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1959
FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

251
342
343
415

1. Storing finger millet. The untidily thatched building on the right is a dormitory for boys

273
415
342
354

2. A queen brewing beer. It is only important people who own oil drums

NGONI

[Facing P. 208]

10: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1959
FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

replaced by new ones, but the village as a whole may be regarded as stationary. The exhaustion of garden land in the vicinity of the village is the principal reason for moving, as with the passage of time a man has to go farther and farther from the village to find new land. Sooner or later it becomes more convenient to move the village to another locality where there is plenty of regenerated land on which gardens can be made. The death of the headman is sometimes followed by a move to a new site, while quarrels within a village may cause a portion of the inhabitants to go off and live on their own, usually after the matter has been referred to the chief. Since 1898 many villages have been moved off land alienated to Whites, or away from congested areas.

When the Administration is the instigator of the move, the new village site is a matter for discussion between District Officer, county chief, and village headman. In moves made on the initiative of the villagers, the various possible new sites are reconnoitred by the headman and other important people in the village and the site chosen is notified to the chief for his approval. The first people start to make their gardens in the vicinity of the site, and work is started on the new village. For this a recently abandoned garden site may be chosen, as it is easier to clear. The first structure to be built is usually a cattle byre. Making a byre is very hard work, and I was told that if it was left till later it would be difficult to get people to tackle the job. Rattray, writing of Gomani's Ngoni of central Nyasaland, relates how the headman's hut is built before the others, but this custom appears to be unknown in Fort Jameson District.[1]

Building is begun by the more industrious before the rains end, and is completed after the harvest. The transition from the old site to the new one is gradual, as, unless the distance between the sites is too great, people will continue working the gardens in the old area until they are exhausted. New gardens are indeed opened up on the old site of the village, and it is quite common to see the ground dug up between the huts at the end of the rains while there are people still living there.

[1] Rattray, *Folk-Lore Stories*, pp. 109–11. Fraser, *Winning a Primitive People*, pp. 203–5, gives an account of the building of a new village among Mombera's Ngoni of northern Nyasaland, in which the cattle byre was built first, but it must be remembered that this was a village built round a central byre, after the fashion of the South-Eastern Bantu, whereas the cattle byre in a Fort Jameson village is nowadays a smaller affair placed on the outskirts of the village.

10: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1959
FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

the edge of gardens, and some people spend most of their time there, returning to the village only to fetch food. Beer parties are held in the gardens, and the villages, particularly in the middle of the week, are largely deserted during the day. One or two boys or old men may stay behind to look after the cattle. Streams are in spate at this time of year, and some men build garden byres to which they move their cattle to avoid the risk of the animals or their herdboys being taken by the water.

This life in the gardens is important from the point of view of inter-village action in that it provides an opportunity for new residential groups to form, albeit temporarily. People without garden shelters of their own may share the shelter of a neighbouring gardener, who may be from another village. People may site their gardens so that they are adjacent to those of kindred from other villages, with whom they will be united for this period of garden residence. Thus, for example, a woman who lives in her husband's village has a widowed mother still living in *her* dead husband's village a mile away. The gardens of the mother and daughter are adjacent, and they both possess garden huts which are built alongside one another. They co-operate in much of the work of their gardens.

With the completion of the harvest, the need for living in the garden ceases, but some people delay their return to the village for a month or so. The explanation given is that immediately after the end of the rains and the harvest, there is much activity by the Administration and the Native Authority in organizing public works, and that by staying on in the gardens people hope to avoid becoming involved in these projects.

Cattle-keeping

The circular village cattle byre, with the dwelling huts built round it in a great circle, as occurs among the South-Eastern Bantu and as reported by Elmslie[1] from Mombera's Ngoni of Nyasaland, is not found at the present time among the Fort Jameson Ngoni. Most villages now have two or three separate cattle byres, and they are placed on the periphery of the village area. They consist of fenced enclosures open to the weather, with a single entrance blocked with poles, and may be up to 20 yards across. Calves are kept in smaller enclosures or in deserted dwelling huts whose owners have gone away or are dead. Where there are well-defined clusters of huts within a village, each cluster may have its own byre, but this is not always the case. Cattle

[1] Elmslie, p. 37.

342 /5 cont'd/ With both bamboo and pole huts, the
[962] construction of the walls and roof is the work of men, while women are responsible for plastering walls, floor and verandah, and for collecting the grass for the roof. Pole huts are more often than not plastered on the outside as well as on the inside of the /6/ wall, and
[353] women like to make designs on them in plasters of different colour, with inscriptions and drawings.

The favourite time for hut building is from June to September,
[221] when there is comparatively little work to do in the gardens. A man may undertake the major part of the work himself, but if his wife is co-operative and brews beer, he will also get his friends to come and
[476] help him, as a working party. Perhaps fifteen or twenty people will come, the men cutting and carrying poles and fixing them in place, the women bringing grass for thatching. If many people attend, then the walls will be put up, and the thatching started, but if the friends are few, then the beer will be finished while the roof of the house is still not thatched, and the owner will have to finish the work himself. In any case, he will need to offer at a later date, either more beer,
[465] or salt, or meat, or sometimes money, to women to come and plaster the walls and floor. Building may however be an operation spread over many months, and if the work is started late in the season, the rains may come before the roof is on. In this case, the building may be left until the following year, when there is again time to spare for building, and good supplies of thatching grass are available. Alternatively, the owner may become discouraged, and use the poles for firewood. A well-built pole hut will last five years and a bamboo hut longer.

● 343 Storehouses are built of bamboo or of thick grass, and are sometimes plastered. They have a detachable roof that acts as a lid, and the whole construction is built on a plastered platform about two feet off the ground. Separate storehouses are used for each household
[692] and for different crops, maize, finger millet, kaffir-corn and ground-
[241] nuts. If a man has two maize gardens, he may keep the produce in separate storehouses. Unmarried and newlywed persons store with their parents. Storehouses last two or three years.

/6 cont'd/

Byres for the cattle are placed on the edge of the village, with a separate division for calves at the side of the main byre. The robustness with which the byre is built depends on the extent to which there are marauding animals, particularly hyenas, leopards and lions in the vicinity. The usual method of construction is using poles some ten to twenty feet long, placed close together in a circle of about twenty to twenty-five feet in diameter. Thorn branches are placed on the outside of the fence, and the gate is a simple affair of several upright poles leaning in a slot made by two cross-poles. If an anthill is available, the byre will be made round it, so that the cattle may to some extent be able to clamber up out of the mud, which in the wet season may come up to their bellies. The building of a byre is undertaken by the men who will keep their cattle in it, and when a village moves to a new site, this is the first job to be tackled. Each owner of seven or eight head of cattle may have his own byre, but a man with many cattle may share a byre with his brothers. Owners of one or two head keep their cattle with their relatives.

/7/ Small domestic animals, such as pigs, goats, sheep and chickens, are kept in the village, near the hut of their owner, and their pens are provided with roofs and sometimes a fence as well, for protection against hyenas. Deserted dwelling huts, whose owners have gone away or have died, are used as shelters for calves and other animals.

Drying platforms are built to provide a stand for reed mats on which flour can be dried in the sun. If no platform has been built, the mats are placed on the ground where the flour is at the mercy of straying animals. Pigeon houses are built on platforms about six feet off the ground, with small holes to allow entry for the pigeons. Chicken houses are also sometimes built in this way, with a ladder to enable the chicken to ascend. The more prosperous villagers may have other buildings, such as latrines, washing shelters, or occasionally open-sided shelters for sitting in and gossiping.